

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2978

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1144

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANA AND YORDANKA)

SUBJECT: MAREV CASE: OUTLOOK INCREASINGLY FAVORABLE

REF: A) STATE 124524; B) SOFIA 1138

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE FOLLOWED SCENARIO REFTELS WITH STRONGLY POSITIVE RESULTS. YANKOV UNDERTOOK TO COMMUNICATE TO CONSULAR DEPT NEED FOR URGENCY. IN INTERVIEW AN HOUR LATER, KOVACHEV SAID GRANDMOTHER FULLY ABLE TO TRAVEL AND ALREADY HAD BEEN "INVITED" TO FILE PASSPORT APPLICATIONS FOR HERSELF AND GIRLS. SCHOOL TERM IS OVER AND MAREVS MAY COMMUNICATE WITH GIRLS AT ANY TIME, BUT KOVACHEV SUGGESTED FIRST CONTACT BE WITH GRANDMOTHER TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF TRAVEL. HE ASKED THAT TICKETS BE SENT "ASAP". END SUMMARY.

2. YANKOV INTERVIEW. CHARGE CALLED ON YANKOV 0930 GMT MAY 31, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION THAT GOB HAD TAKEN STEPS TO SETTLE CASE AND TO DONJO IN ADVANCE OF ZHIVKOVA VISIT SO AS TO INSURE POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE. "WHILE US SIDE OF COURSE WOULD HAM TAKEN EVERY POSSIBLE STEP TO ENSURE THERE WAS NO EMBARRASSMENT TO MME. ZHIVKOVA ARISING FROM THE MAREV CASE," CHARGE SAID, "GOB HAS MADE OUR TASK MUCH EASIER
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AND WE ARE MOST APPRECIATIVE." CHARGE THEN GAVE "STATUS REPORT" (END OF DEMONSTRATION, AVOIDANCE OF CONTACT WITH PRESS, MRS. MAREVA NOT TO TRAVEL BUT HOPES HER MOTHER WILL, AIRLINE TICKETS BEING ARRANGED, ETC.). CONCLUDED WITH HOPE CHILDREN WOULD BE ON THEIR WAY WITHIN NEXT WEEK TO TEN DAYS. YANKOV TOOK THE POINT COMPLETELY, RESPONDING IT WOULD BE BEST IF MAREV GIRLS ARRIVED IN US BEFORE MME.

ZHIVKOVA ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON, THUS MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR CHARGE TO SIMPLY AGREE WITH HIM. YANKOV SAID FOURTH DEPT'S VIEWS WOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO CONSULAR DEPT.

3. KOVACHEV INTERVIEW. CALL ON KOVACHEV FOLLOWED ONE HOUR LATER, WITH CHARGE PROVIDING SAME STATUS REPORT EXCEPT THAT HE LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER MRS. MAREVA'S DRUTHERS ON ACCOMPANYING RELATIVE. KOVACHEV THEN SAID GOB BELIEVED GRANDMOTHER MOST APPROPRIATE PERSON TO ACCOMPANY THE GIRLS AND HAD ALREADY INSTRUCTED VARNA OKRUG COUNCIL TO CONTACT HER AND "INVITE" HER TO FILE PASSPORT APPLICATIONS FOR HERSELF AND GIRLS. HE THOUGHT "INVITATION" HAD ALREADY BEEN CONVEYED AND APPLICATIONS WOULD BE FILED THIS WEEK.

4. ASKED WHEN SCHOOL TERM WOULD END, KOVACHEV REPLIED HE THOUGHT TODAY WAS LAST DAY OF SCHOOL BUT IN ANY CASE MAREVS CAN FEEL FREE TO TELEPHONE AT ANY TIME NOW. HE STRONGLY URGED THAT FIRST TELEPHONE CALL BE TO GRANDMOTHER TO WORK OUT DETAILS OF TRAVEL SCHEDULE, WITH CALL TO GIRLS FOLLOWING THEREAFTER. KOVACHEV ALSO URGED THAT MAREVS ARRANGE AIRLINE TICKETING "ASAP" IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO. "PERHAPS THEY CAN INFORM THE GRANDMOTHER OF THIS WHEN THEY TELEPHONE."

5. CHARGE INFORMED KOVACHEV THAT EMBASSY WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO CONTACT GIRLS, GRANDMOTHER OR OTHER RELATIVES, BUT WOULD LOOK TO GOB TO HANDLE ALL ARRANGEMENTS AND STOOD READY TO ISSUE VISAS WHENEVER PASSPORTS DELIVERED. CONFIDENTIAL

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KOVACHEV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOB WOULD MAKE ALL ARRANGEMENT OTHER THAN TRAVEL, WHICH MUST BE DONE BY MAREVS IN CONSULTATION WITH GRANDMOTHER.

6. AT CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEW, KOVACHEV LAUNCHED INTO BITTER ATTACK ON US PRESS COVERAGE OF MAREV CASE WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED SEPTEL.

7. COMMENT: IT SEEMS REASONABLY CLEAR OUR EARLIER SUPPOSITION THAT IMPENDING ZHIVKOVA VISIT HAD BLASTED THIS CASE LOOSE WAS CORRECT. AT MAY 23 INTERVIEW, "PERSUADING" THE GIRLS TO TRAVEL WAS STILL THE INDISPENSIBLE FIRST STEP. BUT NOW KOVACHEV IS ASKING THAT MAREVS TELEPHONE THE GRANDMOTHER TO WORK OUT TRAVEL DETAILS (AND TO DO SO ASAP), BEFORE TALKING TO THE GIRLS THEMSELVES.

8. AS OF 1000 GMT MAY 31, BALKAN AIR IN SOFIA HAD NO INFORMATION ABOUT TICKETS FOR THE CHILDREN AND GRAND-

MOTHER. REQUEST DEPT DOUBLECHECK WITH MAREVS ON TICKETS
AS WELL AS ADVISE THEM TO PLACE CALLS TO GRANDMOTHER
AND CHILDREN. WE DO IN FACT SINCERELY BELIEVE IT WOULD
BE BEST TO HAVE THE GIRLS EN ROUTE BEFORE ZHIVKOVA
ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON, THOUGH PERHAPS FOR DIFFERENT
REASONS.
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